

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 9, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
301 7th Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to urge you to immediately designate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for nationals of multiple African countries plagued by humanitarian crises. More specifically, we request that you designate the countries of Mauritania, Cameroon, and Ethiopia for TPS protection. For those in the United States, returning to these countries is nearly impossible due to ongoing armed conflict, famine, disease, and threat of human rights abuses by government actors.

TPS was created by Congress as a blanket protection to safeguard foreign nationals in the United States if conditions in their country of origin make safe return impossible. Under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may designate a country for TPS if conditions in that country meet specific requirements regarding ongoing armed conflict, natural disasters, and other extraordinary circumstances. Providing TPS protections to communities affected by these dangerous conditions will allow them to live and work in the United States without fear of deportation.

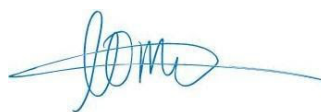
While we appreciate the steps that DHS has taken this year to designate additional countries for TPS, we believe it is critical to recognize that many in the African immigrant community warrant such protection as well.<sup>1</sup> The combination of ongoing armed conflict and food insecurity have left Mauritania, Cameroon, and Ethiopia prone to catastrophic levels of famine. The U.S. Department of State has repeatedly expressed its deepening concerns about the situation in each of these countries, including armed hostilities, human rights violations and atrocities, and the blocking of urgently needed humanitarian aid. Despite repeated calls for de-escalation, political dialogue, and humanitarian relief, the conditions on the ground in each of these countries remain dire.

In sum, it is imperative that DHS designate Mauritania, Cameroon, and Ethiopia for TPS. Conditions in these countries clearly meet the necessary statutory requirements. Already, those in the United States have been deported to their countries of origin with devastating consequences. We strongly urge you to use your authority under the INA to protect these populations by designating Mauritania, Cameroon, and Ethiopia for TPS as swiftly as possible.

Sincerely,



Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress

---

<sup>1</sup> As we understand it, Amnesty International and other civil society organizations previously requested on August 4, 2021, that DHS designate Ethiopia and other countries with majority black populations for TPS (specifically Mauritania, Cameroon, and the Bahamas). <https://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/government-relations/advocacy/amnesty-international-and-civil-society-organizations-call-for-tps-for-ethiopia-080421/>